



Girls of summer 08 Tour Hits Phenom 150 in San Diego

July 30, 2008 4:01 AM

Written by Harold Abend

Purdue-bound Ostarello "racks it up in San Diego & local Californians and Colorado girls shine, too!

Once the Summertime Invitational Tournament concluded last week in Las Vegas, we ventured south via the Southeastern California desert through Needles, Blythe and 115-degree heat to enjoy a stint out in the high desert of Eastern San Diego County. Then, the caravan returned to the Mission City for stop No. 3 in our summer girls' hoops schedule during the NCAA viewing period. Alliant International University near the Miramar Marine Air Station in San Diego was the site of the first annual Phenom 150 Elite Camp.

The July 25-27 event was hosted and directed by longtime boys' event coordinator **Joe Keller** of Phenom Basketball Inc. from the Inland Empire, with assistance from Bishop's of La Jolla head coach and longtime San Diego area club coach **Marlon Wells**, Phenom's National Girls Director. The duo combined to present the first-ever elite girl's camp for Phenom 150 and in doing so offered a well-run, fun and intensive experience for the girl's players. This included top-notch coaches and instructors, plus help from several other local and some distant club and high school coaches like **Carl Mattei** of Regis Jesuit (Denver, Colo.), who directs Mile Hi Magic club out of the Denver area.



Tim Sullivan, an East Coast shooting guru who works with many college coaches including **Jim Boeheim** of Syracuse, was the skills instructor with assistance from Mattei and others.

Wells also brought back three former San Diego prep girls stars that are now starring locally in college. **Paris Johnson** (San Diego High and now at San Diego State) as well as **Amber Sprague** and **Amanda Rego** (both of Mission Bay High in San Diego and now at University of San Diego) coached and mentored the girls during the game competition portion of the camp.

While the local San Diego girls performed very well and garnered six of the top 12 ESPN Cal-Hi Sports rankings of the 160 that attended and were evaluated, a girl from the Badlands of South Dakota not only stole the show but she did something that created quite a stir amongst fans and many of the almost 60 college coaches who attended.

The fact she wears a boys size 14 shoe, has more hop than the energizer bunny, and a wingspan that reminded us of former Carondelet of Concord and current Stanford star **Jayne Appel**, should have given us an indication of what could possibly happen.

However, when 6-foot-1 Purdue-bound **Samantha Ostarello** (2009) (Stanley County, Ft. Pierre, S.D.), the No. 13 rated girl among Hoopgurlz top 100 high school seniors, went to the rack and twice rattled the rim, she pretty much etched her name on the large basketball shaped camp MVP trophy. Ostarello dunked on the first of those moves and then went for an over-the-rim layup.

After three days and a full schedule of practices, drills, workouts, games and seminars, including a motivational talk by former Arizona coach **Joan Bonvicini**, with whom we discussed girls basketball over lunch on Friday, ESPN Cal-Hi Sports was asked to assist with naming the top 20 all-star team (first 20 girls) and the top 40 team (second 20 girls) as well as the Camp MVP.

To figure out which 40 of 160 girls evaluated deserved to play in the all-star games without going by other's opinions or player's reputations; there was a stack of sheets to go through after watching several dozen games.

We burned the midnight and early morning oil to come up with a list that was pretty much agreed upon by Keller, Wells and the 16 coaches of the individual teams the girls competed on.

Then, with the help of Wells, we split the first and second group of 20 girls into two equally matched as possible teams for each of Sunday afternoon's all-star games.

We also passed out our evaluation sheet (which has been updated to reflect the all-star performances and will be integrated into the existing rankings) to around 35 college coaches who attended the all-star games so they could see how we arrived at our decisions.

The top 20 game was highlighted by two of the four D1-comitted players who attended the camp, each of whom was at or near the top of the camp's rankings list.

Ostarello, who all camp was like a woman amongst girls and dominated the paint, perimeter and anywhere she chose to play, anchored the Red team, while Penn State-bound **Gizelle Studevart** (2009) from Wells' Bishop's of La Jolla squad was the first player chosen for the White team.

Studevart was joined by Utah-bound **Diana Rolniak** (2009) of Regis Jesuit, but Rolniak, who was the third highest ranked player at the camp, declined to play in the all-star game. We learned that she had surgery two weeks prior for stomach cancer but still competed, albeit with a little less energy. We'd like to see her when she is fully recovered.

Also starting for White was highly-regarded Regis Jesuit 5-3 point guard **Mariah Williams** (2009), whose maturity, court sense, passing ability, speed, and grades have her on the radar screen of Stanford, UCLA and Arizona State. Another starter was **Ebone Henry** (2009) from Mater Dei of Chula Vista, who had a breakout performance during the camp and definitely improved her stock.

The pivot on White was 6-2 **Angela Misa** (2009) from JSerra (San Juan Capistrano), who played well all camp, dominating inside, and is being looked at by several schools, including Oregon State.

Megan O'Neil (2010), a 6-1 scoring and shot blocking machine out of Regis Jesuit, who according to Mattei is being looked at by New Mexico and Wyoming plus others, started in place of high school teammate Rolniak.



SAMANTHA OSTARELLO

For Red, Ostarello was joined in the starting lineup by **J'Mia Polluck** (2009), a slick 6-1 lefthander who came all the way from Winston-Salem North Carolina's Parkland High to play in this event and a couple of other California and Nevada events. She didn't fail to impress and many college coaches we talked with liked her long arms and smooth style of play.



MARIAH WILLIAMS

The other Red starters were **Jhazmine Lynch** (2009), a speedy point guard from Mater Dei (Chula Vista), who can light it up and who also improved her stock during the three-day camp; shooting guard **Nyeshea Willie** (2010) from Kempsville High in Virginia Beach, Va., who turned in several gritty performances with a good inside/out game; and **Alisha Eckberg** (2009), a big 5-11 guard from Canyon Crest Academy of San Diego who can shoot the trey as well as play inside.

Coaches for the game were **Nadine Domond**, who guided White, a former college and WNBA player and coach from Virginia who works for Phenom basketball back there, and Red coach **Gene Watts**, coach of AAU club Team Ichiban from the Houston area.

Although she didn't start since she was the fifth rated overall guard and fourth rated point guard coming into the all-star games, a local girl shined in the top 20 game and was named game MVP in leading White to a 65-64 victory. It was a game in which Domond went into a Dean Smith-style four corners in the game's final minute as Watts implored his team to get the ball back for a final shot at victory.

It didn't happen because **Denesia Williamson** (2009) from Mt. Miguel of Spring Valley, who dazzled everyone the entire game with her explosiveness to the basket and defensive intensity, dribbled around like a whirling dervish to run out the clock. Williamson, who according to Mt. Miguel coach **Robbie Sandoval** is being looked at by UNLV, USF, Northwestern and St. Mary's, plus others, finished with a game-high 16 points, five rebounds, four steals, three assists and two blocks. Her performance moves her way up in the state player rankings.

Other big time performances for White were turned in by Studevant, who went for 15 points and was 2-of-3 from outside the three-point arc, and Henry, who pulled down 14 rebounds and added six points;

Also with solid contributions for White were O'Neil with six points, five steals, five rebounds and three blocks; Misa, who scored eight points and grabbed six rebounds; Williamson's fellow point guard Williams, who dished off seven assists and had four steals; and **Tiffany Moorer** (2009) from Narbonne (Harbor City) with five points, including a long trey.

Red was led by Lynch with 14 points and Polluck who chipped in with 11 points, eight rebounds, five blocks and three assists. Ostarello added six points, nine rebounds, five blocks and three assists.

Also having solid games for Red were 5-9 guard and Utah-bound **Rachel Messer** (2009) from Thunder Ridge in Colorado, who finished with nine points; 6-0 guard **Tynetta Turner** (2009) of San Diego High with six points, six rebounds and two blocks; Eckberg with six points, five rebounds and two blocks; and Willie, who added six points, five rebounds and two assists.

Shae Kelley (2010), a 6-0 forward from Denver East High in Colorado who is being looked at by Purdue and Arizona State, was injured late in the camp and contemplated pulling out of the top 20 game after being named a reserve on the Red team. She decided to go but was only able to play a few minutes in the first quarter before her back was hurting too bad to continue. Kelley still blocked five shots as fast as the blink of an eye.

To offset Ostarello's dominance during the camp, we stacked the White roster with both top point guards as well as Misa, the second best inside player with Rolniak out.

The result was there was no head-to-head matchup between Williams and Williamson, but both shined, and Lynch, who went toe-to-toe with Williams, benefited from the roster makeup. It also made for a close game that was exciting for the fans and allowed the players to best show their skills.

In the top 40 game, the Red team, led by another Regis Jesuit girl, **T'Keyah Shealy** (2010), a 6-0 forward being looked at by Oregon State, UC Santa Barbara and Gonzaga, led 43-31 at the half en route to an easy 77-62 victory.

Shealy led the way with a game-high 15 points, adding four steals and three rebounds. Other solid contributors were: **Brittney Strickland** (2010) (Mundy's Mill High, Jonesboro, GA) who scored 13 points; **Brianna Johnson** (2009), a 5-10 guard from Mitchell High in Colorado Springs, who had 10 points and five rebounds; **Cheyenne Curley-Payne** (2009) from Eastlake in Chula Vista, who despite already being back in school at Eastlake and commuting on Friday, finished with a solid game at point in the top 40 game for the winners. The speedy, quick-handed 5-5 Curley-Payne had a good all-around performance with nine points, five assists, three steals and three rebounds.



Coach Gene Watts gives a speech.

Oh yes, Ostarello got the big bronzed basketball trophy for camp MVP. She even endured our constant teasing and imploring her to slam one more through the rim and nylon before we cleared out the gym

"You should have asked me three days ago, she said with a laugh. 'Don't you know how many games I've played?"

We know. We saw and enjoyed watching all of them.

Highly regarded Austrian transplant **Inga Orekhova** (2009), a 6-3 wing from Bishop's (La Jolla) who hasn't played since February when she tore her ACL, didn't play in any games, but did work out for some of the college coaches.

At one point in a drill we saw her drain nine three point shots in a row off one dribble. We saw her a few other times in skills and drills and she will be included in the next release of the Girls of Summer rankings as will all girls we see until the end of the month.

White was led by Highlands Ranch of Littleton, Colorado's **Meagan Fulps** (2009), a 5-8 point guard who had 10 points, three assists and two blocks. According to our sources, Fulps is being recruited by Nebraska, Utah, Creighton and Montana State.

Also for White, **Sherika Miller** (2010) from West Hills of Santee, a 5-11 forward, hit all three of her three-point shots for nine points, and 5-9 guard **Tae'lor Purdy** (2009) (Deer Trail, Agate, Colo.) had eight points, four rebounds and three steals.

